

January 5, 2007

EXHIBIT 15  
DATE 1/9/07  
SB HB 2

Regards: State Library Budget Hearing

Representative Wells and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Sue Brown, and I am a teacher at Flathead High School in Kalispell.

I would like to encourage your support of continued and adequate funding for the Montana State Library statewide databases. The opportunity for our high school library to be a part of this network and to access InfoTrac is essential to our school programs.

Students at all levels use InfoTrac for their research. Because of the breadth of the types of on-line full text that this database provides, students are able to greatly enhance the quality of their research over what is traditionally available in a school library. The state support to make this database available at an affordable price to all the libraries helps to level the playing field for all regardless of location or wealth.

The database is particularly important to adequately preparing our college bound students for the rigors of research required of them at the university level. I have had the opportunity to work with our International Baccalaureate Program students and can attest to the critical necessity of providing students in our high schools with quality, peer reviewed research materials. Our students are required to complete a significant amount of research for the IB program, and they regularly find the journal databases to be very valuable. Instead of relying blindly only on internet sources which are often not credible sources, they are able to weigh the internet information against the peer reviewed information that InfoTrac makes so accessible. That allows them a basis for judging the credibility of their other sources and further strengthens their critical thinking skills.

Libraries are an important foundation of the American ideal of making information freely available to all. Information, most importantly quality information, is vital to the survival of our democracy. Little that you do as a legislator can have as significant and as positive an effect on helping to guarantee the survival of our quality democratic way of life than supporting our libraries. I strongly encourage you to fully fund the Montana State Library and the statewide network of magazine databases.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for choosing to serve in the legislature.

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